



RICHARD STOLTZMAN

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CANTOS

## Tōru Takemitsu (b. 1930)

- 1 **Fantasma/Cantos\*** 17:23  
**Richard Stoltzman**, *clarinet*  
**BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra**  
**Tadaaki Otaka**, *conductor*
- 2 **Water-Ways** 9:51  
**Tashi**: Peter Serkin, *piano*/Richard Stoltzman, *clarinet*  
**Ida Kavafian**, *violin*/Fred Sherry, *cello*  
**Barbara Allen, Nancy Allen**, *harps*  
**David Frost, Richard Fitz**, *vibraphones*
- 3 **Waves** 10:41  
**Richard Stoltzman**, *clarinet*  
**Robert Routch**, *French horn*  
**Ronald Borrer, Richard Chamberlain**, *trombones*  
**David Frost**, *bass drum*
- 4 **Quatrain II** 16:31  
**Tashi**: Peter Serkin, *piano*/Richard Stoltzman, *clarinet*  
**Ida Kavafian**, *violin*/Fred Sherry, *cello*

\*World-premiere recording

Produced by Max Wilcox

Recording Engineers: 1—Max Wilcox, Simon Rhodes;

2—4—Max Wilcox, Ray Hall



Total  
 Playing  
 Time:  
 54:51  
 ASCAP/BMI



COMPACT  
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**Robert Rouch**, *French horn*  
**Ronald Borrer**, **Richard Chamberlain**, *trombones*  
**David Frost**, *bass drum*

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4 **Quatrain II**

**Tashi**: Peter Serkin, *piano*/Richard Stoltzman, *clarinet*  
Ida Kavafian, *violin*/Fred Sherry, *cello*

16:31

1 recorded June 2, 1992 at Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, Wales

2 – 4 recorded October 1978 at RCA Studio A, NYC

Art Director: Scott Johnson

Cover photo: John Pearson

Inside photo: Akira Kinoshita

**M**y first awareness of the musical world of Japan's greatest composer, Tōru Takemitsu, was in some ways subliminal. Sitting in the darkness of art cinemas, I was swept away by Kurosawa's unforgettable images, which were immeasurably enhanced by his music, full of powerful silence and poignant, unpredictable sounds. Then, as a member of the chamber ensemble Tashi (Peter Serkin, piano, Ida Kavafian, violin, Fred Sherry, cello, and myself on clarinet), while performing *Quartet for the End of Time* for its composer Olivier Messiaen, I first met Tōru, who had been observing the performance and discussions. That was the beginning of what has now become some 20 years of admiration, collaboration, and friendship. Along the way Tōru has honored Tashi, myself, and the literature for clarinet with four modern masterpieces: *Quatrain*, *Waves*, *Water-Ways* and *Fantasma/Cantos*.

*Quatrain II*, essentially the earliest work on this disc, was first conceived as a work named *Quatrain*, for Tashi and full symphony orchestra. *Quatrain* was premiered in Tokyo in 1975 by the ensemble with Seiji Ozawa and the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra; *Quatrain II* is the composer's 1977 transcription for quartet alone. The eight-measure quatrain, announced after a brief introduction and repeated at the end of the work, is Takemitsu's loving homage to Messiaen—crystalline chords by the piano, ethereal glissandi by the violin and cello, and a long-lined melody by the clarinet, later echoed by the cello.

Tōru told us that the form of *Quatrain* is based on a Japanese style of painting known as "emaki"—a series of scenes painted in a long scroll—whereby each musical idea is independent yet permeates its neighbor, keeping an indefinite frame. Midway through the piece is a superb "Messiaenic" moment: at a so-called "grand pause" the preceding sounds gradually die away, revealing a clarinet tone played as softly as possible. This signals the start of a virtuosic 10-measure section leading to a rapturous piano solo, at the conclusion of which the entire 10-measure section is played again—backwards.

While each work is unique, *Waves* (1977) represents a special encapsulation of two salient aspects of Takemitsu's art: dream images of nature depicted in sound using techniques adapted from Japanese instruments (here, the shakuhachi), integrated with harmonic references to Impressionist and jazz composers (here, particularly to Duke Ellington). At one point Takemitsu had hoped to study orchestration with Ellington, and *Waves'* matching of clarinet with two trombones, horn and bass drum is thus not as peculiar as it may seem; indeed, the sliding and bending brass tones maintain a moody atmosphere the Duke would have clearly understood.

One aspect of *Waves* has its roots deep in Takemitsu's dramatic and cinematic experience. Tōru asked that when this piece is performed on stage the musicians enter and begin in darkness; the lighting then gradually reveals the performers, coming up to full about the time of the first *sforzando* attack of the bass drum. After the final sustained chord, the stage lights slowly fade to black as the musicians breathe into their instruments, directing toneless sighs around the auditorium while the bass drummer rubs the drum membrane, filling the hall with mysterious vibrations.

*Water-Ways*, written in 1978 and dedicated to Peter Serkin, is another inimitable work of nature imagery. Tōru told Tashi he was inspired to write the piece as he worked in his studio in the countryside. He would watch a nearby stream, where individual rivulets of water gradually join together for a time and then separate and move off on their own. In bringing this imagery to life, Takemitsu gives sensitive expression to his good friend John Cage's aleatoric esthetic: floating among freely played vibraphone, piano and harp gestures are three pitches repeated indefinitely by the violin, cello and clarinet at different speeds, until at some undetermined moment they coalesce into one single melodic stream.

The most recent work, and making its recording debut here, is *Fantasma/Cantos* (1991), a one-movement concerto for clarinet and orchestra. The work was premiered at the Cardiff Festival of Music on September 14,

1991, by myself and the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Tadaaki Otaka. The composer provided a brief introduction to the score for its premiere:

The two Latin words used for the title of this work—*Fantasma* (fantasy) and *Cantos* (song)—are synonymous.

After a brief introduction, a clear melodic line, as a result of colorful figuration, ambiguously undergoes metamorphosis.

The structure of the work is influenced by Japanese landscape gardens in the "go-round" style. You walk along the path, stopping here and there to contemplate, and eventually find yourself back where you started from. Yet it is no longer the same starting point.

*Fantasma/Cantos* was conceived in response to an open commission Takemitsu received from the BBC and to a "200-year" concert project I had been contemplating, in which masterpieces from 1791 (the Mozart clarinet concerto), 1891 (the Brahms clarinet quintet), and 1991 would be performed. For the contemporary work, I turned to Tōru, who agreed to submit a clarinet concerto (thus eminently satisfying both parties!). The piece is nothing less than a summation of 20th-century clarinet techniques, yet it never loses sight of the instrument's eloquence and tonal range.

But as its title announces, *Fantasma/Cantos* is not *about* technique at all. No less than the Mozart or Brahms classics from the previous two centuries, the Takemitsu work remains true to the clarinet's inherent songfulness and to the way intervals create songs with traditional meaning. For example, in the score a simple clarinet scale passage is marked "Calm," and, when the very same passage returns, "Calm and Ecstatic." On the page the passages seem slight and unassuming, but when heard in context they're heart-stopping, and touch the listener immediately.

The dreamy, unreal atmosphere is realized by a rich texture of full string orchestra, winds, and an expressive percussion ensemble: vibraphone, glockenspiel, antique crotales, tubular bells, cymbals (including one inverted and resting on the skin of one of the tympani), tam-tams, and Thai or Indonesian gongs. The clarinet wends its way along this lush garden, stopping here and there to sing its song and listen to its echo; eventually it reaches the end of its path, where the music is just like the beginning—yet no longer the same.

—RICHARD STOLTZMAN

**Richard Stoltzman**, whom the *Washington Post's* Paul Hume singled out as "an artist of indescribable genius," has achieved the kind of prominence that eludes all but a handful of internationally recognized artists. He has appeared as soloist with over 100 symphony orchestras, and his acclaimed recitals and chamber-music performances have taken him throughout the U.S. and to Canada, Europe, South America and Japan. He is a founding member of the chamber ensemble Tashi, and he has appeared as a guest artist with numerous other ensembles, including the Beaux Arts Trio and the Guarneri, Cleveland, Emerson, Amadeus and Tokyo Quartets. He also has given joint recitals and recorded with such artists as Emanuel Ax, Yo-Yo Ma and Peter Serkin, and with the premiere jazz artists of our time. With Bill Douglas he has offered informal evenings of music-making integrating jazz improvisation with classical repertoire, and their recordings appear consistently on the *Billboard* charts.

Among Richard Stoltzman's awards are the 1986 Avery Fisher Prize and a Grammy for his BMG Classics/RCA Red Seal recording, with Richard Goode, of the Brahms sonatas. His extensive discography with BMG Classics also includes a CD/VHS/Laser Disc recording of his part in the Emmy Award-winning *Concerto!* series, and a Laser Disc of his "1791–1891–1991" concert program, released initially in Japan, which will soon be available in the U.S. and Europe.

**Tashi**—Tibetan for "good fortune"—was founded in 1973 by Peter Serkin, piano, Ida Kavafian, violin, Fred Sherry, cello, and Richard Stoltzman. Through their far-flung performances and their many BMG Classics/RCA Red Seal releases (including their classic recording of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*) they quickly achieved renown for their collective musical insight, empathetic cohesiveness as a chamber ensemble, and the breadth of their repertory. Many works have been written for Tashi, by composers such as Bill Douglas, Lukas Foss, William Thomas McKinley and Charles Wuorinen, in addition to those by Takemitsu presented here. In 1992–93 members of Tashi were joined by violinist Theodore Arm and violist Steve Tenenbom for an extensive U.S. tour to celebrate the ensemble's 20th anniversary.



Tōru Takemitsu, Richard Stoltzman and Seiji Ozawa

Tōru Takemitsu  
Cantos  
Richard Stoltzman • Tashi



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- Fantasma/Cantos
- Water-Ways
- Waves
- Quatrain II